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March 20, 2012

Ms. LaDonna Turner  
Site Assessment Manager  
U. S. EPA Region 6 (6SF-TR)  
Technical and Enforcement Branch  
Superfund Division  
1445 Ross Ave. Suite 1200  
Dallas, Texas 75202

**RE:** Pre-CERCLIS Screening Assessments of Four Legacy Uranium Mines within the Grants Mining District, New Mexico

Dear LaDonna:

Enclosed for your review are four pre-CERCLIS screening assessments (PCS) of four legacy uranium mines (Rio Puerco, Section 25 Shaft, Section 25 Decline, and Divide Mine Sites) within the Grants Mining District, Sandoval and McKinley Counties, New Mexico that were prepared by Earle Dixon of the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Superfund Oversight Section (SOS).

Currently, the existence of regional impacts from legacy uranium sites to the ground water system has not been determined. Ground water impacts from "dry" mines such as these sites could potentially impact the alluvial ground water system through leaching of contaminants from waste rock piles. Additionally, contaminants could potentially impact the surface water system via runoff to arroyos/ephemeral streams.

A comprehensive investigation of potential alluvial ground water impacts from "dry" former uranium mines, including the area of the Divide, Decline and Shaft Mine Sites, within the Grants Mining District is recommended as part of regional ground water quality characterization. Depending upon the results of this investigation, site-specific ground water characterization activities may be warranted. Additionally, further characterization of ground water may be necessary at the Rio Puerco Mine Site.

Based on preliminary information reviewed for the PCSs, further investigation under CERCLA is recommended for all four mine sites. NMED will submit site discovery forms for these sites based on further prioritization of the sites in the Grants Mineral District. NMED will work closely with EPA, the New Mexico Energy Minerals and Natural Resources Department, the Bureau of Land Management, and the US Forest Service

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as necessary to coordinate and support response actions at these sites. Please contact Earle Dixon of the NMED SOS at (505) 827-2890, or me at (505) 827-2434, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Phyllis Bustamante  
Acting Manager  
Superfund Oversight Section

Enclosures: Four Pre-CERCLIS Screening Assessments (Rio Puerco, Section 25 Shaft, Section 25 Decline, and Divide Mine Sites)

Copies with enclosures:

Lisa Price, EPA  
John Pfeil, NMEMNRD

Copies without enclosures:

Kathy Gibson, EPA  
Janet Silva, NMED  
NMED/GWQB/SOS Read file, April 2012